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UNCLAS BRATISLAVA 000051

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TAGS: [SMIG](#) [PGOV](#) [KJUS](#) [LO](#)

SUBJECT: TRAFFICKING VICTIM TELLS HER STORY

1. Summary: A Slovak woman came to Embassy Bratislava to provide details on her ordeal of being a victim of human trafficking and how she used fraudulent documents to enter and remain in the U.S. between 1998 and 2003. Conoff and poloff initially interviewed the subject on December 29, 2003. RSO further investigated the allegations on January 7, 2004. The subject was seeking advice to clear her U.S. criminal charge of grand theft in order to have the option of traveling to the United States in the future. We offer her story of how she moved from Slovakia through Europe to the U.S. as a snapshot of human trafficking. Post provided information on organizations that offer assistance to trafficking victims both in the U.S. and Slovakia. End Summary.

From Slovakia to the Czech Republic  
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2. In August 1997, a trusting seventeen year old met an Albanian national - Tony - at a local Bratislava caf. Having known Tony only for a few days, she accepted an invitation from him to travel to Prague, Czech Republic for a weekend, which turned into two weeks of shopping and relaxing at one of the most exclusive hotels in Prague. During their stay Tony purchased clothes for her and took her to fine restaurants.

From the Czech Republic to Germany  
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3. On what turned out to be her last day in Prague, Tony introduced her to two other women, one Slovak and one Ukrainian. Shortly after the introduction, all three women were told to pack and that they would be going to Germany. When she asked why they were going to Germany, she was told nothing except to get into the car. At this point, the subject felt as though the situation was out of control and Tony had disappeared. The group of women were put in a car and driven to Duisberg, Germany by an unknown male. Once in the car the doors were locked and she was not permitted to leave. She assumed she slept at the border crossing, because she does not recall showing any documentation.

4. Upon their arrival in Duisberg, Germany, the women were taken to an apartment where their handlers changed their hair color and brought them new clothes to wear. The women were guarded and not allowed to leave the apartment except when being transported to a private club to work. At this club, the women were forced to engage in sexual acts and nude dancing against their will. During a chance discussion with the club's owner, she mentioned that she was under 18 years of age. Upon hearing this information, the owner discussed the situation with her Albanian handlers. After that, she was taken to Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

From Germany to the Netherlands  
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5. Arriving in Rotterdam sometime in September, she was forced to work in another club. Again, as in the previous club, she was forced to engage in sexual acts and nude dancing against her will. She stated that the owner's Jamaican girlfriend Michele managed the business and was the one to be feared. Several women worked voluntarily at the club, but the majority was forced to work and live in an apartment in the same building. There were usually between four to eight women in single bedrooms. They were under constant supervision and were prohibited from leaving the building. When the handlers were not happy with earnings, the women were beaten with care taken not to leave bruises. She often spoke of her situation with customers, even though it was strictly prohibited.

From the Netherlands to the U.S.  
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6. She lived in Rotterdam for four months until she met a club customer, who offered to help her escape the

situation. After several meetings at the club, a Canadian national - Stanley - spent approximately USD

1,000 to obtain a fraudulent Belgian passport and driver's license. She suspected that he also paid a significant sum to the club for her release. Both walked out of the front door in mid January 1998 and she went along with him to get out of Rotterdam.

Living in the U.S.

17. She entered the U.S. in January 1998 in Los Angeles under her assumed name and using her fraudulent Belgian passport. Stanley maintained two residences in the U.S. and traveled frequently for business. She claimed that Stanley was possessive and required that she accompany him while traveling around the United States. She was left alone quite infrequently. She was not physically prevented from leaving the house and did not report any physical abuse; rather "mental abuse". For example, Stanley would mention that it was he who rescued her from the club in the Rotterdam and that she owed him for that.

18. Stanley introduced her to his business associates as his wife and they had no other friends. While living in the U.S she contacted her family in Slovakia, who had initiated an Interpol search, and was later visited by her sister and nephew. According to a trafficking expert at the International Office for Migration (IOM), the subject enjoyed a good life with Stanley until she realized that he was not going to take her home and that she had no legal rights.

Return home

19. After approximately four years in the U.S., she realized that her fake passport would soon expire and that she would be trapped. She devised a plan to get caught stealing a purse, hoping authorities would notice her fraudulent passport and force Stanley to assist her in some way to return home. The plan worked and she was arrested for grand theft. Stanley discussed the need to renew her Belgian passport or risk being caught by INS and deported to Slovakia. She attended her first court hearing, but did not tell the police that she was using a false name or that she wanted to return to Slovakia.

110. Using her fraudulent Belgian passport, Stanley assisted her return to Slovakia to obtain new identity documents in her true name. They traveled from the U.S. to Mexico City, Paris, Prague, then finally to Bratislava. This departure from the U.S. was prior to her sentencing hearing for her grand theft conviction. In September 2003, they stayed in a hotel for the first few days in Bratislava. During this time she told Stanley she did not want return to the U.S. with him. A few days later Stanley left Slovakia alone, but she now worries that he will return for her. He is currently on business in Bangkok, and she also speculated about his possible intentions to traffic another minor.

Background Information

111. The subject came from an affluent political family in Slovakia and speaks excellent English. She feared deportation or negative press about her experience because of her family's position in Slovakia. She is currently finishing high school in Bratislava, while working as an English teacher and translating for the Slovak police. She told RSO that she wanted to clear her name in the U.S. court system. She felt bad for stealing the purse and wanted to be able to travel to the United States in the future.

Comment

112. Post offers this narrative to help shed light on trafficking patterns and tactics employed by traffickers. Post directed the subject to the trafficking unit at Police headquarters and a local NGO, both of which were unknown to the subject. She

offered to volunteer her experience in discussion groups organized by the International Office for Migration (IOM) for young women. Post advised her to retain a lawyer in the U.S. for her criminal case. In addition, post provided some addresses of Florida trafficking organizations for further advice on legal matters.

THAYER

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